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SIPDIS

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TAGS: PHUM PREL SOCI CU

SUBJECT: BULGARIAN COMMITMENT TO CIVIL SOCIETY AND HUMAN
RIGHTS IN CUBA

REF: SECSTATE 131637

Classified By: K. ADAMS-SMITH FOR REASONS 1.4 (b) AND (d).

¶1. (C) Embassy delivered reftel points to Svetla Stefanova, Director of the Latin America Department in the Americas Directorate at the Bulgarian MFA. Stefanova, who recently returned from Havana, welcomed the changes to the U.S. policy towards Cuba. Bulgaria supports the EU Common Position towards Cuba, and Stefanova noted that Bulgaria would need to see dramatic human rights improvements in Cuba before it considers any change to the policy. In general, the Bulgarian embassy in Havana engages with all spheres of Cuban society, including dissidents, opposition groups, and human rights activists. The impact of this engagement, however, is unclear due to the difficulty in determining the true identity and affiliation of those seeking contact with the Bulgarian embassy (Stefanova believes that up to 50 percent of them are government agents). Official Bulgarian delegations to Cuba are prohibited from meeting with any group or individual outside the official government. Bulgaria is committed to engaging civil society in Cuba and the human rights situation will play a crucial role in future Bulgarian decision-making on the EU Common Position.

SUTTON